

**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**General Motors Recall Press Conference**  
April 1, 2014

We are here today under tragic circumstances. Thirteen Americans have been killed in defective General Motors vehicles.

Later today, I'll have the opportunity to ask Mary Barra (BAR-RUH), the CEO of GM, how and why the company took so long to inform the public about this defect and to recall the vehicles.

But now, I want to acknowledge the families of some of those victims for joining us today and for speaking up about their loved ones. I know it's difficult, and it takes a great deal of courage to speak out about what happened.

And I know the pain you are suffering. You have not only lost family members, but you have lost them in an accident that might have been prevented if GM had acted sooner.

We owe it to you to find out the facts today.

We began our investigation several weeks ago, and the information we have obtained to date reveals a disturbing pattern: again and again, GM discovered or was told about problems with their vehicles – and the company did nothing.

This morning, I am releasing a new analysis of never-released GM warranty claims. GM has received over 130 warranty claims from drivers and GM technicians who experienced and identified the defect. Drivers reported that their cars shut off after hitting bumps or potholes ... at highway speeds ... when they did something as simple as brushing the ignition switch with their knee.

The comments from the vehicle owners in these reports are chilling given what we now know.

Here are some examples: [quote] “vehicle stalls out when hitting bump [slash] pothole in road, noticed at 50 [miles per hour]”; [quote] “when bumping ignition switch area vehicle will shut off”; [quote] “vehicle died at highway speeds”; [quote] “ignition key turns off when going over bumps”; [quote] “key ring heavy and shutting off ignition”; [quote] “vehicle shuts off intermittently ... caused by bumping ignition with knee while driving”; [quote] “vehicle quit running while driving about 70 [miles per hour] after hitting bump in the highway.”

GM knew about all these problems – but it took them more than a decade to recall the vehicles.

We must find out what went wrong inside the company that allowed this to happen.

We also must take action to ensure that it does not happen again.

That's why today I am introducing the Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 2014. This bill is modeled on the legislation that the Energy and Commerce Committee passed in 2010, but was never enacted into law. It will make more information on defects available to the public. And it will increase NHTSA funding and increase civil penalties for manufacturers when companies like GM fail to comply with the law.

I hope the Committee takes up this bill quickly after today's hearing. On behalf of the families who are here today, we must improve the law to prevent the next auto safety tragedy.